



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Distinguished Career recognized**

### ***NAVAIR Lakehurst's George DiBiase earns Service to America Medal***

June 20, 2006: LAKEHURST, NJ

You know you've got a hard job when a 99 percent success rate isn't good enough, and failure can be the difference between life and death. That would be a fair description of George DiBiase's work. Fortunately, he's been up to the job throughout his 54-year career in the federal service.

George DiBiase is the Chief Engineer and Department Head of the Navy's Support Equipment/Air Launch & Recovery Equipment (SE/ALRE) Engineering Department, managing 1,350 employees and controlling a \$184 million budget for salaries and \$365 million for contracts. Translation: George DiBiase is the guy who makes sure that military planes on aircraft carriers take off and land safely.

As a result of his dedication and accomplishments, DiBiase has been selected to receive the 2006 Service to America Career Achievement Medal awarded by the Partnership for Public Service and Atlantic Media Company at a tribute breakfast held in the Hart Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C. this morning.

The Partnership for Public Service (a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to revitalizing public service) and the magazines of Atlantic Media (*Government Executive*, *National Journal* and *The Atlantic*) present these Service to America Medals each year recognizing the accomplishments of America's outstanding

public servants. The categories recognized include: Federal Employee of the Year, Career Achievement, Call to Service, Homeland Security, Justice and Law Enforcement, National Security, International Affairs, Science and Environment and Citizen Service.

As the Career Achievement Medal winner, DiBiase and his Department influence the design and development of every carrier based aircraft system, aviation capable vessel and Navy and Marine Corps aircraft weapon system in our military. DiBiase is personally recognized as an expert on aircraft launch, recovery, landing aids and support equipment for the Navy and Marine Corps ashore and afloat.

DiBiase's most noteworthy accomplishment is the invention and development of the low-pressure steam catapult used to launch aircraft from carriers. Since the launch of the USS Abraham Lincoln in 1989, every aircraft carrier has hosted his invention. Because this system requires less energy to operate, it has doubled the life of each carrier's power plant, saving an estimated \$1 billion per ship. This accomplishment earned DiBiase the nickname, "Mr. Catapult."

In order to keep up with a changing environment, where aircraft continue to increase in weight, speed, complexity and cost, DiBiase has led the effort to keep the supporting systems modern. DiBiase personally initiated and promoted such programs as the Electro-Magnetic Aircraft Launch System, a state of the art, electro-magnetic launching system to replace the steam catapult system currently installed on all carriers, and an advanced arresting system to catch the aircraft upon their return. These systems would not only update 60-year-old technology and equipment, they would also reduce by 30 percent the number of people needed to operate and maintain any future systems. These two new systems are scheduled to be on the next aircraft carrier after CVN-77, USS George Bush.

DiBiase has not only led the effort to make launch and recovery systems more efficient, but also to make them safer. In 2000, DiBiase's unit began to observe an increase in the number of defective parts that were compromising the safety of their systems. DiBiase documented that saving money on cheaper parts was leading to poorer quality systems, which, in the end, cost our military more money and exposed military personnel to unnecessary risk. DiBiase created the "Flight Safe" program which increased minimum standards for the quality of manufacturing parts used in the Navy's systems. It is estimated that this program has already saved the Navy \$32 million in just 5 years.

To understand how little room for error George DiBiase and his team are afforded, think about this statistic. If the launch and recovery system that DiBiase's team developed and maintains were 99 percent successful, our military would lose about 1,400 planes a year. But thanks to DiBiase's team, the actual reliability of this system is 99.999999 percent, meaning we lose about one plane per three million launches.

You know you've made it in your profession when you are known simply by a nickname. While it may not be as catchy as "Magic" or "Ol' Blue Eyes," George "Mr. Catapult" DiBiase has definitely made it.

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**"NAVAIR provides cost-wise readiness and dominant maritime combat power to make a great Navy/Marine Corps team better."**